

Teaching the Writer: What Students Need

The Writing Advisory Committee members identified the following essentials for every writing program to ensure that all students become independent thinkers and writers. Place a check in the box beside each item that was referenced in the data DVD, *Teaching the Writer: What Students Need*.

What can we do to ensure that all students become independent thinkers and writers?	
Literacy	
Give writing as much emphasis as reading.	
Have students read as writers.	
Provide students with opportunities to practice critical thinking.	
Use instructional models that reflect a variety of experiences and offer a language-rich environment.	
Authenticity	
Help teachers understand authentic idea development and have models for them to use.	
Provide writers with varied types or modes of writing; use this to address the diversity of the learner.	
Provide ways for students to share work in meaningful ways.	
Offer more choice and ownership in what students write about.	
Identify where in the curriculum students will write about the ideas about which they really care.	
Allow as much opportunity for authentic writing as possible in order to motivate the writer.	
Leadership	
Expect the principal to be visible and to hold teachers accountable for quality writing instructional practice.	
Ensure that policy does not drive inauthentic writing instruction and instead promotes quality over quantity.	
Move from “top-down driven” teaching of writing to teachers valuing schoolwide writing.	
Provide training for teachers who are coming into our schools with limited experience in writing instruction.	
Encourage collaboration so that all teachers use writing to support content learning.	
Schoolwide Writing Program	
Communicate that content writing is valued across the curriculum and includes all three types of writing.	
Adopt a skills-based approach to writing, not just assigning pieces or topics.	
Ensure effective primary writing instruction.	
Expect that all teachers are teachers of writing.	
Provide valuable feedback to students about their writing.	
Involve parents and encourage them to adopt a literacy emphasis at home.	
Approach writing as a combination of skills and processes, not as an assessment.	
Create a community of writers within the classroom using technologies (blackboard, blogs, etc.) or outside resources.	
Acknowledge a broader definition of writing by recognizing students’ multiple literacies (instant messaging, text messaging).	